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SUBJECT: TURKISH AUTHORITIES: DETAINED ISLAMISTS NOT A  
THREAT TO US INTERESTS

REF: IIR 1671 0011 10

Classified By: DCM Doug Silliman, for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

11. (S) Refuting Turkish press reports to the contrary, Turkish National Police (TNP) contacts tell us their investigations into recently detained groups of alleged domestic Islamic extremists reveal no plans or intentions to attack American interests in Turkey. The TNP detained or arrested up to 130 individuals in separate operations across the country, beginning with 13 arrests January 15 in Ankara (REF IIR). Both the TNP and sensationalist Turkish press referred to the detained and arrested individuals as Al Qaeda members. Our assessment, based on liaison with the TNP and other Turkish security agencies, is that the suspects are not actually believed to have ties to al-Qaeda; rather, "al-Qaeda" is being used by the media and police as a catch-all term for suspected Islamic extremists regardless of organizational affiliation, or whether they have an organizational affiliation.

12. (S) The detentions and arrests appear to us to have been pre-emptive. The TNP's goals may have been to disrupt nascent Islamist cells and show their members that their activities are subject to monitoring. We understand charges against many of the detainees may be difficult to substantiate. We believe most detainees have been released and that persons still in custody have been formally charged.

13. (S) We will continue our liaison with TNP and other security agencies and will relay to addressees Turkish authorities' final conclusions regarding the arrestees' activities and intentions. We are evaluating the arrestees for placement on Visas Viper and other appropriate "watchlists."  
Jeffrey

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